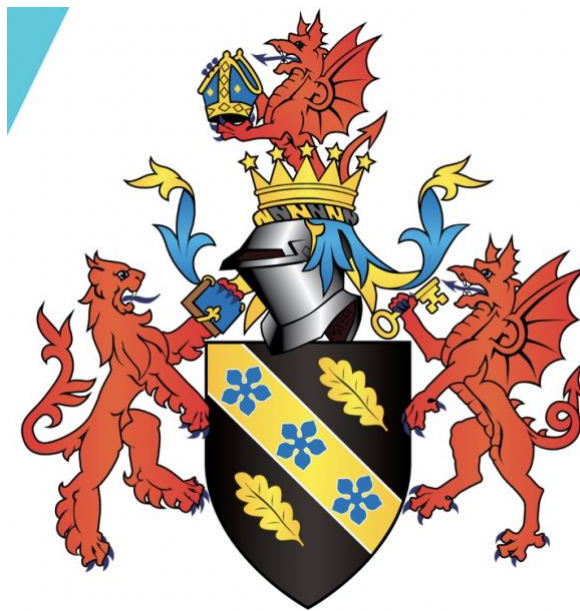


Module: BMSS5004
Sport & Exercise Psychology

Modiwl: BMSS5004
Seicoleg Chwaraeon & Ymarfer Corff



Asesiad / Assessment :
Interview / Cyfweliad

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Identifying The Perceived Sources and Debilitating Factors of Sport Confidence

Introduction

Many of the greatest athletes in their given sports often credit their success to their psychology or mindset. Confidence in sport performance is seen as a necessity for success by many, as Carl Lewis the winner of 9 Olympic gold medals said, 'If you don't have confidence, you will always find a way to not win.'. Over recent decades Sport-confidence has been a topic of interest among researchers. Sport confidence is defined as the belief that you can successfully perform a desired behaviour, thus the athlete having a high expectancy of success (Weinberg and Gould, 2019). Vealey & Knight's 2002 research working with sport psychologists found that some athletes' confidence was affected by their ability to perform physical skills, use psychological strategies, and their ability to make decisions and adapt to situations when it matters. This suggests that confidence in sport is multidimensional, and having awareness of other factors is useful for identifying an athlete's area for improvement.

This research aims to identify what causes an athlete's confidence to increase or decrease prior to and during competition. This study will use an experienced athlete's reflections via interview, to discover which factors had a significant influence on their confidence. This might suggest future studies focusing more on factors that have lack in research, or it might support what most of the relevant research has already discovered.

Results

The interview participant is a 36-year-old male triathlete with good experience, having competed in 5 Ironman triathlons as well as other competitions that include swimming, running, and cycling. The interview (see 'Transcript of Interview' in appendices) consisted of questions to have the participant reflect on their performances to identify what increased and decreased their sport confidence.

The athlete's answers found various factors having an impact, some reoccurring into themes. Some influences increasing sport confidence were; experience, competing away from home and away from familiar faces, a successful training programme leading to the

competition, feeling relaxed, focusing on one own's performance and not others, being self-aware of their competency and skill, setting new records, consistent improvement, motivation from friends, spending time alone prior and sometimes during performance, putting less pressure on self, mastery of skill, beating opponents during performance, having data on opponents.

The athlete's answers also revealed what decreased their sport confidence. Some factors identified were; overthinking, seeing the event's location prior, setting too ambitious goals, not achieving goals, losing during the competition (being behind), feeling defeated mid-performance, accumulation of minor losses, seeing opposition doing well, not knowing the opposition, familiar faces present at competition, other competitors with matching skill-level.

Positive Themes:

Experience

- *'I've been doing triathlons now for 7 years.'*
'a lot of it comes down to experience as well.' - These two quotes from the participant point that their confidence has increased overtime from experience. He feels that experience plays a significant role in his confidence and success.
- *'using past experiences because I've done it. I've done it before so I can relate back to other experiences where I've gone wrong.'* – Again, experience continues to increase his confidence long-term. This resulted from being aware of his past shortcomings, leading to modifications in preparation and improvement, and this improvement of performance lead to increasing his confidence.
- *'I've just built up the experience cause it's the 5th full ironman that I've done, so you know what to expect'* – Knowing what to expect increased their confidence going into the event. Some get anxious when going into the unknown, experience can offset this and make one feel more confident in performance.

Improvement / Competency / Mastery

- *'I had a really good block of training'* – The athlete felt they had sufficiently prepared physically; everything was going well regarding training for the competition. Consistent improvement.

- *'I knew none of the other guys were faster than me.'* – Knowing his opponents' skill level increased his confidence. He sounded sure that he was better than his opponents, he believed it.
- *'again, solid block of training, I think all of the races I've done this year I've PB'd in'* – Consistent improvement increased his confidence.
- *'I was a stone heavier racing this year than last year over a full distance, yet I was racing faster so the form is there.'* – Improvement over previous results, feeling in good form all increased his confidence.
- *'I'm a bit of a faster swimmer compared to the group'* – Again, believing he was more competent than his opponents increased his confidence.
- *'Total Immersion (book), that just put my confidence in check then.'* – Mastery of his event / skill increased his confidence.

Relaxation / Pressure

- *'I just felt relaxed'*
- *'Staying relaxed helped me get my goals.'*
- *'this year, I was a lot more relaxed going into it (competitions), and the results have been better for it.'* – this suggests that being relaxed prior to competing helps with performance, mentioning that his results have showed this.
- *'Again, it's the most relaxed I've been'* – The athlete credits part of his success and confidence to being relaxed. Efforts could be made in the future to identifying their sources of relaxation and implement them prior to performance.
- *'normally I set myself goals that are too high, and this time I set them a bit lower.'* – Goals that were too ambitious had a negative impact on their confidence, but setting less ambitious ones improved their confidence.
- *'Putting less pressure on myself'* – By demanding less from himself with training and performing, his confidence increased.
- *'I read through it (a book on swimming) and it was all about being more relaxed and efficient in the water, using less energy for the same effort, and that's how my training*

went throughout the year.’ – The athlete intentionally performed and trained their sport more relaxed; this increased their confidence.

Social Environment / Being alone / Away from Familiar Faces

- *‘if you don’t know the people then you don’t have those thoughts in your head, and have less pressure then.’* – Not knowing competitors and spectators led to less overthinking and pressure and helped with their confidence for performance.
- *‘only about 6 of us from Swansea that did it’* – Not having so many familiar faces present decreased the pressure, competition and maybe expectations put upon him, he felt this helped his confidence.
- *‘your mates are like “you can beat him” helps with getting edge in competition.’* – Praise and motivation from his team increased his sport confidence.
- *‘got a taxi without all our friends and family’* – Having time alone and away from distractions helped his confidence.
- *‘I always tend to be on my own. I think that helps me calm myself down, there’s no one there to wind me up, I can just get in the zone and go from there.’* - Being alone and able to focus positively affected his sport confidence.

Winning / Achieving Goals

- *‘you could sort of see back up the lagoon of all the swimmers behind you’*
- *‘after the swim I immediately looked at my watch and saw it read 59 minutes 13 seconds, so I was like that’s in the bag. I was happy from there I could have finished the race.’*

The athlete mentions visually seeing the opponents behind him increased his confidence, the feeling of winning. He achieved a personal time-based goal during the competition, he felt happy regardless of the race’s result.

Focusing on Self

- *‘I felt that I wasn’t competing against them but rather against myself, I think I found that a bit easier.’*

- *'I always tend to be on my own. I think that helps me calm myself down, there's no one there to wind me up, I can just get in the zone and go from there.'*

Focusing on himself made it easier to execute his most confident performance. He also spent time alone prior to performance, away from distractions and overthinking, it helped him focus.

Negative Themes:

Overthinking

- *'I feel it's always the run up to doing it, just the nerves, the what-ifs, and the overthinking that can dent your confidence and motivation a bit.'*
- *'We had a quick look of the swim the day before we registered and that normally adds nerves to it.'*

The athlete expressed his decrease in confidence and motivation from his mind thinking negatively prior to the event. Seeing the location of the competition also made him feel nervous, daunted by the sight of it. These can be examples of overthinking and common pre-performance anxiety.

Focusing on Opponents

- *'That was me early on in my triathlon career where I was really competitive with others, wanting to beat times, and I think that's where I failed.'* –
- *'a more local event say Swansea it could be 50 or 60 people I know, and you know competing then it's the added pressure of who you want to beat, who you think you should beat.'*

Focusing on others and their results decreased his confidence, this could have added pressure and make him demand more from himself.

Feeling of Losing / Not Achieving Goals

- *'up until that point all I was thinking was, "it doesn't matter I'm not going to do it" (goal of sub-hour swim)'*
- *'But then pushing myself hard in the run, someone who I'm better than passes me, my confidence drops seeing that'*
- *'My mind says "it doesn't matter now, I haven't beaten them now let's just get to the finish line" when I should keep competing.'*
- *'it's when I'm overtaken by people that I want to beat that knocks my confidence a bit.'*
- *When asked if the accumulation of minor losses during performance harmed his confidence, he replied 'Yes definitely.'*

Although the athlete did achieve the goal once he saw his time, him thinking that he didn't achieve his goal temporarily decreased his confidence. Being overtaken by opponents in the race decreased his confidence and motivation to try.

Discussion

From the interview, improving their skills and being aware of it was a source of confidence leading into competitions. Similarly, athletes in Vealey's research found Mastery as a source of confidence, defined as 'Mastering or improving personal skills' (2001). Additionally, Bandura stated that Mastery helps to cope in difficult situations and influencing efficacy expectation (1977). Regarding this, and Sport-confidence being defined as the belief that you can successfully perform a desired behaviour (Weinberg and Gould, 2019), this suggests that Mastery greatly relates to sport-confidence, although not as a primary source for our athlete. Overall, this could be due to us not asking the athlete to rate the influence of his sources, or factors such as his age, which mastery was of more focus earlier on in his career but may now his experience a more useful source.

In this interview, the athlete frequently mentions first-hand Experience as a source of sport-confidence for him. In contrast, Vealey's Model of Sport Confidence (Horn, 2008) states Vicarious Experience is a source and doesn't mention first-hand experience. However, Bandura stated that one's own experience reinforces one's self-efficacy, by increasing their

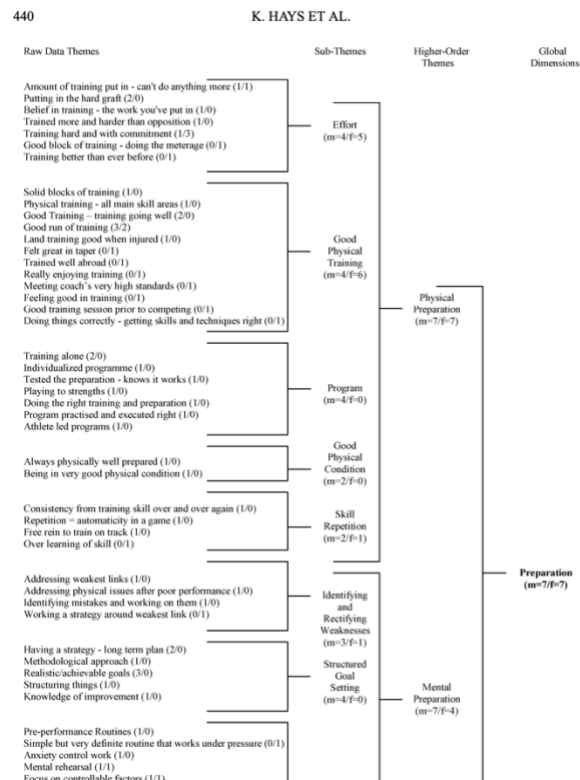
level of effort, persistence, and eliminating defensive behaviour in stressful situations (1977). Bandura ultimately connects first-hand experience with influencing behaviour and efficacy-expectation in his theory, stating that more evidence found personal experience as a source rather than vicarious experience. Self-efficacy meaning a situation-specific form of self-confidence, a belief that one can perform a desired behaviour successfully (Kent, 2001), with confidence similarly meaning one's belief of performing a task successfully (Weinberg and Gould, 2019). This suggests that first-hand Experience does provide a source of sport confidence.

He mentions past achievements and experience in combination, therefore it's appropriate to assume that achievement is also a source of confidence for him. In parallel, Weinberg and Gould's work (2019) show that Vealey chose in her Model of Sport Confidence that one of its 3 primary sources is Achievement. Similarly, this participant's quotes support Achievement as a source, although not as a primary source. Additionally, Koehn et al.'s (2013) study evaluating Vealey's Model of Sport Confidence with mainly team-sport athletes also identified the same sources. However, Kingston et al.'s (2010) athletes had different results, their methods used the Sources of Sport Confidence Questionnaire / SSCQ (Vealey et al., 1998) where experience or achievement was not a selectable option, this could explain their different results. It could be that our study's methods, including using only one athlete differed to the other papers' and produced different results to previous literature. Furthermore, it's possible that the Model of Sport confidence is based on elite athletes' sources, where achievement is significantly higher (Hays et al., 2007), and this interview's use of a non-professional athlete might contribute to the difference in findings here.

As a non-professional athlete, he might rely more on experience than achievement. He states using mistakes from experience to alter his preparation for future events, it can improve preparation by rehearsing situations and setting new goals (Thompson, 2019).

Goal setting is greatly associated with sources of sport-confidence among athletes (Sagitarius, 2017), (Vealey, 2001), (Weinberg and Gould, 2019). Despite this, the athlete expressed the pressure he felt from setting aims that were too ambitious, additionally, he said not reaching some goals that he'd set would decrease his confidence. However, he does say that staying relaxed in events helped him reach any goals that he had set and this increased his confidence, *'Staying relaxed helped me get my goals.'*, *'after the swim I immediately looked at my watch and saw it read 59 minutes 13 seconds, so I was like that's in the bag. I was*

happy from there I could have finished the race.’ Maybe this eased pressure, then made him feel in excellent form and increased his confidence. Subsequently, regarding his most confident performance, he consistently mentions that the training programme prior was successful, this might have contributed to him feeling less pressure and the most relaxed he’d ever been. Similarly, an athlete in Hays et al.’s research said, *‘I just feel very relaxed, very happy with myself and happy with how my preparation has gone . . . you never know what’s going to happen the next day but you’re confident that you can perform’* (2009). Furthermore, an athlete in Hays et al.’s study mentioned this *‘Because the pressure’s on in competition you need confidence in the training you’ve done and the dives that you’re gonna perform, and confidence in your ability to control your nerves’*, another said *‘training is a major issue in my confidence.’* (2007). Therefore, it’s possible that setting too high aims can make the training programme’s goals unlikely to be achieved, this would add pressure of not reaching the aims set for the event, make him less relaxed and decrease his confidence for the event. This might be an example of Efficacy Expectation, a source mentioned in Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory (1977). To conclude, this suggests our athlete should set less ambitious goals to ensure a successful training programme to stay relaxed, thus maximising their sport-confidence.



(Figure 1)

Aside from goal-setting, this athlete gained confidence from their social environment. Equally, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory says that social environment can contribute to successful performance (1977). In parallel, Vealey's Model of Sport Confidence has Social Climate as a primary source (Weinberg and Gould, 2019). Specifically, our athlete's social environment included verbal motivation from teammates, this supports Bandura's (1977, 1986) self-efficacy theory where Verbal Persuasion is a source. Likewise, Kingston et al.'s study of also found social environment to be a source (2010). Their research used elite athletes, all of which also being individual-event athletes, this study used a non-professional individual athlete, this could suggest that social environment is a strong source of confidence among individual athletes regardless of standard.

The athlete altered his environment by being alone and intentionally away from familiar faces. In contrast, Vealey's Sources of Sport Confidence had athletes derive confidence from Environmental Comfort – 'feeling comfortable in a competitive environment' (Vealey, 2001). The difference here could be that the athletes in her research emphasised the advantage of performing at home, winning over 50% of their 'games'. Provided that the term 'games' suggests that the athletes predominantly participate in team sports, their pressure would likely be spread out over the team compared with most individual athletes when they compete at home (Wergein et al., 2022). Additionally, for an individual athlete's events, much of the crowd are spectators rather than supporters, this might increase pressure to do well without the motivation that team-sport athletes would get (when not representing a nation in competition). Concerning this, our athlete quoted *'a more local event say Swansea it could be 50 or 60 people I know, and you know competing then it's the added pressure of who you want to beat, who you think you should beat.'* In contrast, he said regarding an event away from home *'if you don't know the people then you don't have those thoughts in your head, and have less pressure then.'*, where he did seem to derive confidence from the competitive environment. Ultimately, he said his most confident performance was in Copenhagen, this suggests his social environment is a source when away from his family, friends and even sometimes his fellow triathletes.

Relaxation was the primary source of confidence for the athlete, with more confirmations of this in the interview than for any other factor. He says his most confident and successful performances were when he was the most relaxed he'd ever been, suggesting it's his greatest

source. Similarly, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977) asserted that Relaxation positively affects Emotional Arousal, a source of self-efficacy in the theory. He mentions being mentally and physically relaxed from putting less pressure on himself with goal setting and learning to be more physically relaxed during performance. Interestingly, him being more relaxed during performance was a result of mostly things going well prior to performing. Equally, world class athletes in Hays et al.'s study mention their confidence gained from preparation 'helped control nerves'.

Many of the sources of confidence identified in the interview were a result of thinking and actions implemented prior to the competition, this could suggest that Preparation is a fundamental theme to these sources, this was also identified by Hays et al., an athlete said *'If you fully prepare to the best of your abilities and you leave no stone unturned, you have ultimate confidence when you go into a game'* (2007). Their study then grouped similar sources into a fundamental theme of Preparation (see Figure 1). Veale self-admittedly found limitations in their Model of Sport Confidence and then listed 9 primary sources, which included Physical and Mental Preparation (Vealey, 2001). This could validate the significance of Preparation as a source of sport confidence.

Practical Implications of Sport Confidence Sources

He has sources that increase his confidence before performance and some such as 'winning section' that take place during. Most of his sources are established before performance and some occur during performance, this could mean effort should be made to maximise the sources prior to competition and implementing a few more sources during to further increase confidence.

World Class athletes in Hays et. al's (2007) study credited mental skills such as visualisation as a source of sport confidence, they also worked with sport psychologists to assist in their application. However, some club and county rugby union players in Hill and Shaw's research (2012) mentioned that methods such as visualisation did increase confidence to perform well, but its effectiveness was limited by the athletes' lack of knowledge to apply it properly. Furthermore, Weinberg, and Gould (2019) listed the use mental skills as a 'characteristic of robust sport confidence', further emphasising its importance of learning and

applying to increase sport confidence. Ultimately, educating athletes and coaches to use mental skills from a more fundamental level could be an area of increased focus in sport psychology.

These primary sources of confidence for the athlete seem to be those more in the athlete's control than other sources, the athlete mentions focusing on themselves as a source and says focusing on opponents decreased their confidence. His preparation was in his control, his relaxation was mostly in his control, whilst the environment and what his opponents were doing wasn't. Likewise, Vealey et al. found deriving confidence from uncontrollable sources such as environment might develop weaker perceptions of control and competence (1998). Ultimately, we suggest focus on enhancing preparation with every factor controllable such as physical and mental training, sufficient nutrition and sleep, as when these are adequate, they can improve coping with competitive anxiety to improve confidence (Liu et al., 2021).

Future Research

Future research could replicate the circumstances of this study and use questionnaires such as Borg Scale and CSAI-2. The benefit of these is the use of scoring each theme that effects sport confidence, this could give clearer data if done with an interview by identifying which factors influenced confidence more than others.

Future research could seek to further evaluate the social and demographic factors that affect the sources of confidence identified in this interview and previous literature. Factors such as gender can affect the rate of influence a particular source has on an athlete's performance of an activity, Veale's (2001) research found that females were less confident than males in more masculine perceived events and males less confident than females in more feminine events. The study also found that Physical Presentation was a more important source of sport confidence to female athletes compared with male. Equally, Kingston et al.'s (2010) research also showed a difference in sources of confidence comparing male and female athletes. Studies could apply the models and theories and identify certain patterns that result from assessing these social variables to make new discoveries in the area.

Kingston et al.'s (2010) study identifying sources of sport confidence over-time nearing competition was measured with the SSCQ. The limitations of this were that the

sources were pre-selected as part of a questionnaire, whereas an interview would be a better method for unexpected or unconventional sources to be identified due to its free-spoken nature (Wilson et al., 2004). Using interviews and questionnaires identify different sources of confidence (Kingston et al, 2010), (Hays et al., 2007). Using interviews for a study taking place repeatedly nearer and nearer to competition might reveal different answers and raise interest in new interventions.

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Appendices

Appendix (a)

Transcript of Interview

Interviewer: Hello, my name is Cameron James and I am a 2nd year student studying Sport and Exercise Science at UWTSD in Carmarthen. I am researching the topic of sport confidence and would like to identify the factors that could cause your confidence levels to increase or decrease (i.e., sources and debilitating factors of sport confidence).

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. As part of this study, I am investigating where peoples' come from and what factors trigger increases and decreases in your confidence in sport.

The interview contains several parts that will discuss your experiences of sport confidence within sport. The results from this study will be written up and submitted as a piece of coursework for a sport and exercise psychology module within my degree programme. Please remember that all the information you provide will be anonymised so that your name or anything that might identify you (e.g., the team you play for) will not be linked to any responses you make. When writing up this work I may select quotes from this interview to illustrate important points, but your identity will be protected at all times. In order to ensure a complete and accurate account of your responses, the interview will be recorded and later transcribed.

As a participant you have certain distinct rights, This interview is about your experiences of participating in sport, and as such if you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions, then you are free to decline to answer or ask for the interview to be stopped. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experiences of taking part in sport, and as such, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions within the interview. I hope therefore, that you will respond in a clear and straightforward way. If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering or if something is not clear, please let me know. If you do not want to enter into discussion about a particular topic any further, just say "no comment" and we can move on. If you have questions, please feel free to ask them at any point.

During the interview, I will be asking about your personal experiences as a player / performer within sport and this may go back a few years. Please feel free to take your time when recalling any aspect of these experiences; and do not hesitate to include anything that you believe to be important. This may include things such as relationships, family or work. If you are unable to recall an event, please let me know rather than guess. Before we progress to the interview, do you have any questions?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: I'll start by asking which sport you perform and how long have you played it?

Participant: I've been doing triathlons now for 7 years.

Interviewer: What club do you compete for?

Participant: Swansea Vale Tri.

Interviewer: What is your best and most valued achievement in your sport?

Participant: I feel it was my most recent result, the full distance in Copenhagen. This was 10hr:13mins over a full distance event.

Interviewer: Great, thanks, we'll move to the next section. Now we'll discuss the factors that you think influence your confidence levels the most. We'll go through some sources to understand what increases and decreases your confidence levels, and how this influences your performance. So think of a competition where you performed really well, and you felt really confident about that performance. You could describe the week in the run-up to the competition.

Participant: Yeah, I'll relate back to Iron-Man in Copenhagen, it was a massive, great event. I felt confident whilst doing it, I feel it's always that run-up to doing it, there's just the nerves, the what-ifs, and the overthinking that can dent your confidence and motivation a bit. Other races I've been the same, I think with Copenhagen it was less pressure cos it was only a handful of us out there competing where as if it was a more local event say Swansea it could be 50 or 60 people I know and you know competing then it's the added pressure of who you want to beat, who you think you should beat.

Interviewer: Yeah that makes sense, so you find it easier to perform in front of people you don't know?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: So why were you so confident?

Participant: I had a really good block of training and yeah I just felt relaxed again I think cos it was only about 6 of us from Swansea that did it, and I knew none of the other guys were faster than me. So I felt that I wasn't competing against them but rather against myself, I think I found that bit easier

Interviewer: That's a good answer. So those are the reasons you felt that way. Did your confidence increase as you got closer to the competition?

Participant - Uhm yeah again solid block of training, I think all the races I've done this year I've PB'd in, the ones I've done year on year, I've done better than. There have been races where I didn't perform as well, but they were new races for me but I've learnt the last year and a half the more I train, a lot of it comes down to experience as well.

Interviewer: So would you say that you're in your best form since you've started?

Participant: Yeah saying that I was a stone heavier racing this year than last year over a full distance, yet I was racing faster so the form is there, I think I've just built up the experience cause it's the 5th full ironman that I've done, so you know what to expect even though you know going round Copenhagen it's a course I've never done or seen. We had a quick look of the swim the day before we registered and that normally adds nerves to it, but yeah just felt good.

Interviewer: Okay, did anyone have an influence on your confidence levels that week before your competition?

Participant: Yeah, the guys I go out with we all love a bit of banter, discussing what times we should do (race times). The hotel we were staying in we made friends with other competitors, and when they start throwing they're numbers out, your mates are like 'you can beat him' helps with getting the edge in competition. That was me early on in my triathlon career where I was really competitive with others, wanting to beat times, and I think that's

where I failed. Whereas this year, I was a lot more relaxed going into it (competitions), and the results have been better for it.

Interviewer: Thank you for your answer. Now describe the morning of the competition, up to the point that you finished the performance.

Participant: Again, it's the most relaxed I've been, it was a long trip down to the start line where we (athletes competing) got a taxi without all our friends and family who had to use the metro. And then it's a bit of unknown because I'm a bit of a faster swimmer compared to the group, or with a lot of the people I train with. I find that good because I can self-seed how I'm going to do in the swim, I always tend to be on my own. I think that helps me calm myself down, there's no one there to wind me up, I can just get in the zone and go from there.

Interviewer: Because it was the most relaxed you've been? Was Copenhagen the most relaxed you've been in a competition?

Participant: Yeah, normally I set myself goals (that are) too high, and this time I set them a bit lower. The only pressure I put on myself was the swim, it's my favourite one. Staying relaxed help me get my goals.

Interviewer: What do you think helped you the most, decreasing the pressure on yourself by making the goal lower? Or was making the goal lower just giving you less things to think about?

Participant: Putting less pressure on myself, and using past experiences because I've done it. I've done it before so I can relate back to other experiences of where I've gone wrong. You can then relate to why you shouldn't do something that way, I used to race the swim knowing that I'm a fast swimmer and wanting to get a personal best or sub-hour swim, an arbitrary time that someone just throws out. But this year, after being shown a book by Geraint the lecturer, I read through it and it was all about being more relaxed and efficient in the water, using less energy for the same effort, and that's how my training went throughout the year.

Interviewer: Was the book called swim-smooth?

Participant: Total Immersion, that just put my confidence on check then.

Interviewer: I find that very similar my sprinting, the more relaxed you are, the faster you are. The last question for this section, what things influence your confidence levels during the event? A few examples are the opposition, the team, coach, family, friends?

Participant: All of the above, when I finally got my sub-hour swim, which halfway around the swim I didn't think I'd get. But the way the course was laid out, you'd come round and I think it was the second before last boy, and you could sort of see back up the lagoon of all the swimmers behind you, and because you're sort of self-seeded yourself you could see all the different caps who self-seeded themselves under an hour. I had loads of them behind me, and up until that point all I was thinking was it doesn't matter I'm not going to do it (sub-hour swim) but when I came around that boy I thought 'all these people can't be wrong'. Then after the swim I immediately looked at my watch and saw it read 59 minutes 13, so I was like that's in the bag. I was happy from there I could have finished the race, doing the transition (to bike) I then didn't feel like I was rushing and we had a really fast transition. Went out on the bike, and being a faster swimmer you normally find that the faster cyclists come past you, so for the first lap of the bike I allowed people to pass me, rather than like in previous races

I've tried to catch them but I didn't want to burn myself out this time. But as I did my first lap of the bike, I came in at 22mph for 56 miles whereas I only needed 20.5mph and then my head took over, I thought 'try and hold 22', I ended up coming in at 21.5 mph so I lost a bit of pace at the end. But the last 5 miles were where my mood dipped, I just wanted to get off the bike. When the run started, I felt great, and that's where we were at the capital where you'd see all your friends and family and I was the first out on the run I'd seen my family and friends on the first lap as I go past, then as others joined the course then you run side-by-side and see each other, you use them as a timing gate, are they catching me? Am I catching them? Those sort of things added to the competition of the run which keeps it interesting because 4 laps of the same course can be a bit daunting.

Interviewer: Thank you for your answer. Now we're going to discuss the factors that you think influence your confidence levels in a negative way, to understand what could decrease your confidence levels. Think of a competition where you were expected to perform really well and you were really confident about the performance, however for some reason, your confidence levels dropped in relation to how you felt you should perform in this competition.

Participant: I put myself in front of certain people when we all line up for a race. Because running's my worst discipline, I tend to push myself hard in the run, having done the swim and the bike well, it makes me start the run feeling good. But then pushing myself hard in the run, someone who I'm better than passes me, my confidence drops seeing that, my pace then drops as well. My mind says 'It doesn't matter now, I haven't beaten them now let's just get to the finish line' when I should keep competing. Whereas if someone was in front of me who I wanted to beat as I come off the bike and I can see them in front of me, it would drive me forward, but it's when I'm overtaken by people that I want to beat that knocks my confidence a bit.

Interviewer: Do you think it's these mini losses during performance, these accumulating is what harms the confidence?

Participant: Yes definitely.

Interviewer: Okay, was there anyone that caused this drop in confidence? For example, the teammates, the opposition, coach, parents/friends? You mentioned the opposition, in that event or any event did these other examples hurt your confidence in any way?

Participant: They're all teammates, they're all friends, at the end of the day we all train together, we're all part of the same club or I know people from other clubs then we all want to beat each other. Their performance might drop my confidence a bit, but on some events they've gone past me and I've gone past them and we have mini battles, but not knowing the difference in levels or who's overall better... does drop it, I'm unsure how to explain it.

Interviewer: Not knowing your opponent? Do you feel the better you know them and their level, the more comfortable you are against them?

Participant: Yeah definitely, I'm very data-oriented and competitive, sometimes I just need to hold myself back

Interviewer: Did you not often get a drop in confidence from the people on your side? Mainly others from other clubs? The coaches never decreased your confidence?

Participant: Yeah mainly opponents I knew less about, coaches never dropped it no.

Interviewer: Can you describe the morning of the competition up to the point that you performed poorly? What things caused you to perform poorly?

Participant: At that event there 55 people from the club, and it was a local race, the people from the other local clubs are there, familiar faces, you know some beat you last time, some got close last time. All of those mini battles in your head are happening, if you don't know the people then you don't have those thoughts in your head, and have less pressure then.

Interviewer: Okay good, that's everything as far the interview. Before we conclude fully, I have a few questions. How did you feel the interview went?

Participant: Yeah fine.

Interviewer: Did you feel that you were able to tell all that you wanted to ?

Participant: Definitely.

Interviewer: Were you unhappy with any of the questions that I asked?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Do you think that I led or influenced your answers in any way?

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Participant: Not at all.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your participation.

End of interview

Appendix B – Interview Consent Form for Participant

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant name or Study ID Number: Jordan Discombe

Title of Project: Interview - Identifying The Perceived Sources and Debilitating Factors of Sport Confidence

Name of Researcher: Cameron Deacon James

Participant to complete this section:

Please initial each box.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered

☒

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☒

I agree to take part in the above study.

☒

I agree to the interview being audio recorded

☒

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

☒


Signature of Participant

13-11-2023
Date

Name of person taking consent

Date